

THE REASON IS SIMPLE ENOUGH:

Why I Fight. by

Raymond Luc Levasseur

I also think it's a good idea not to have any fixed notions in one's head. I don't want any one to tell me where I should put my attention first. If down the line we can try to respect each other according to the principle of self-determination then we can begin to move forward. There are enough of us to go around and you don't have to do what I do and vice versa. I do this and you do that, there is plenty of room. ■

June Jordan

My first act of sabotage was committed when I was seventeen years old—several years before my military service and tour in Viet Nam, several years before the Viet Nam experience jolted my consciousness and propelled me into a lifetime of political activism.

I was shown how to temporarily disable machinery by French-Canadian workers. The objective was to draw the line at how many shoe heels we could produce per hour, beyond which it became exhaustive and dangerous. A short respite in a non-union shop which had pitifully low wages. The object lesson was that we could penetrate the veneer of omnipotence that the company maintained. We had our dignity—dispelling, in some small way, the shadow of the mills that dominated our lives.

U.S. imperialism is the most powerful and violent system on the face of the earth. In 1967, in Viet Nam, this was bought home to me. In 1991, its being rammed home to the people of Iraq and Palestine. The entire history of the U.S. is built on theft and violence. Within U.S. borders is found its legacy—the fractured nations of Native Americans, Mexico, New Afrika, and Puerto Rico.

It is not only the violence of the bomb and the bullet that is bullishly amerikan, It is also the violence of the spirit; the violence of a warped economic/political system that forces one generation after another to watch their children die from starvation, malnutrition, disease, and social neglect. A violence which demoralizes and debilitates people whose human potential evaporates before their eyes. An imperialism that has always savored particularly violent action against people of color.

My own life experiences have left the taste of sweat and blood indelibly stamped in my mind: the conditions of work. Low paying, non union, assbusting, hazardous jobs in mills, factories, fields, and construction sites; military service and the carnage in Viet Nam; police violence— the first of which I was

subjected to in Boston's Dorchester neighborhoods; prisons, where I've been in some of the nation's worst. My identity as a worker/revolutionary permits me no retreat from the suffering of others, be it in El Salvador, South Africa, Palestine, Puerto Rico, or the South Bronx. From a vantage point inside the belly of imperialism, I feel compelled and duty bound to act. Not as I once did--an armed soldier of the U.S. military, oiling and operating the machinery of war. This time as a worker armed. A soldier still at war, operating from whatever level of resistance that can be mustered to challenge those who exploit and kill for profit.

I have been identified with acts of armed resistance that include the bombing of U.S. military facilities, corporations doing business with the apartheid regime of South Africa and colonized Puerto Rico, and the research facilities of war profiteers. In the wake of the Soweto uprising and massacre, the Sam Melville-Jonathan Jackson Unit responded with propaganda of the deed, with the wholesale massacres of Salvadorean people, the United Freedom Front responded with armed propaganda. U.S. military facilities were extensively damaged.

These actions were intended to bring to the attention of the American people the crimes committed by their own government and U.S. corporations. They were to serve as an example that the system is not invincible. That the demands of the oppressed must be heard.

I believe that such acts of resistance are a political necessity if we are to develop a capacity to respond to the violence of the State that is more than simply symbolic. It is necessary if we are to build a resistance movement that will lead to our own emancipation, rather than merely creating a movement for a revolution others will make. Such acts see their legality confirmed in international law, such as the Nuremberg decisions.

Within the context of exposing and preventing the commission of heinous crimes against humanity, we can't all be expected to function within the parameters of what is considered "clean" and acceptable political activity. Nor should we wait for everyone's ideas of the proper objective conditions to be in place. Some of us will step out of the realm of subjective conditions

get "dirty" and bloodied while engaging the enemy. History is rife with examples. This is a dangerous and difficult task given the powerful security apparatus of the State, the compliant and collaborating news media, and a relatively weak Left.

In other parts of the world, liberation movements' key focus is freedom; with most U.S. left/progressive movements the focus is non-violence. It is not only criticism of our actions and ourselves which comes from the Left- it is condemnation. However, I've not heard condemnation coming forth from Soweto, Morazan Province, Ponce, or the ghettos and barrios of Amerika. Nor would I anticipate any condemnation by the people of Iraq or Palestine should there have been a more forceful response within this country to imperialism's latest adventure. Many leftists and progressives recently opted for the slogan "support the troops, not the war" virtually absolving American soldiers for any responsibility for their actions. Yet these same folks abandon political prisoners/pow's in the U.S., holding us responsible for political/military actions they don't approve of. IF they are even aware of our existence.

The more sectarian organizations respond negatively to armed actions. They don't recognize anything that isn't on their agenda or under their control. But there is something more insidious at work within political movements as a whole, composed in large part by white, middle class activists. How is it they can dictate to the most oppressed people in Amerika the methods they will use to obtain their own liberation? (Amerika's longest held political prisoners are from the Black Liberation struggle.) Are we expected to wait, before we resist, for some illuminating end to white supremacy and class cooptation/collaboration? And what of those millions subjected to police violence and grinding poverty, down pressed in the streets and prisons of all kinds, who will die tomorrow, next week, and next year. Are we to be relegated to inferiority in the movements the way we have been in society? Amerika has a way of turning on itself, of abusing its young and devouring its elders. We live in a country where people support the nuclear destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the invasions of Grenada and Panama. The Mid East war. The murder in Central America. Simply put, the difficulty of winning hearts and minds should not preclude uncompromising acts of armed resistance.

A single spark can start a prarie fire- assuming there's a bit of dry tinder about. There are examples of Native American resistance, Nat Turner's revolt, John Brown's raid, El Grito de Laras, Puerto Rico- even the legendary Boston Tea Expropriation. There are thousands of other examples thruout the history of common people. They are fragmented, divided by time, groups, and issues, but armed resistance is a real part of our history. It was in the 60's, 70's and 80's and will be again in the future. It dosn't have to be a chapter or even a footnote in the books to realize that such resistance has provided some degree of inspiration and direction to many who's lives were leveled by oppression.

Many of the SM-JJ/UFF actions were done in solidarity with liberation struggles subjected to the full force of U.S. imperialism. Movements fighting for the very lives of their people. These rearguard actions were a small thread of support within the larger context. None of these actions were to the detriment of the struggles they supported, nor to the activities of those organizations which work in the general public. Anti-imperialism requires a multi-dimensional, multi-level approach.

The government, of course, has responded to militant and armed resistance with extensive counter-insurgency efforts. This should surprise no one familiar with this governments criminal activity. The reason is simple enough: they fear the potential of such resistance to proliferate and develope into formidable movements. They detest the example as much as the actions themselves. They fully realize the potential of the oppressed.

Marion Prison, April, 1991

Amnesty International has condemned Marion Prison for not "approaching" a single minimum requirement for the treatment of prisoners. Ray is but one of over one hundred and fifty political prisoners held in many of the most repressive prisons in the amerikan gulag. He is slated to be transferred to the sensory deprivation prison currently under construction in Colorado. You can write: Ray Levasseur, 10376/016, Marion, Ill, 62959.

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